

October 11, 1985

Dear Garin Har Chalutz Members,

Shalom. Well, I've written a number of reports over the last 16 months—some positive, some less so, some with frustration, some with excitement, but no report thus far can match this one, in which I can finally say, "**Har Chalutz has been established!**" The first group of nine families officially moved to the mountain on September 27. I can tell you that nothing in my life can match the excitement of that day, watching the trucks driving up the road and turning on the generator that afternoon and seeing the lights come on for the first time as darkness approached.

Haim and I have been incredibly busy over the past two or three months, with all the many preparations for our move to the site. We were able to achieve most of our goals, not all, but most. The group decided at a mini-Kinus we held in Haifa in August that we wanted to move up to the site prior to Sukkot, and we made it (with 36 hours to spare!). I cannot tell you what a great feeling it was to build the Sukkah on the mountain as settlers, and we recalled the previous year, when we went up and built a Sukkah in the mess that was then the Moked, and pledged to ourselves to be living there the next year.

The physical conditions of the site, as well as to and from the site, are as follows: twenty caravans for housing, as well as caravans for public facilities, are in place. Three shelters have been installed. The electricity is operated by a generator which runs on diesel fuel, and has given us no problems so far. The sewage and water systems are in place and working well. The houses are in excellent shape. Outside the houses, the yards are basic rock piles, but we have all started cleaning up, trimming vegetation and generally getting ready for the winter.

The walkways within the Yishuv are packed gravel, and the Sochnut is currently preparing the plans for walkways. They should be in within the next two months. Topsoil and landscaping follow the walkways, but with winter and rain quickly approaching, we may postpone topsoil until the spring.

We are optimistic about the telephones. We will have a wireless within two or three weeks, which operates like a regular phone. We have also heard that the communications ministry will be installing phone lines throughout the area in the coming months, and the rumors thus far are very positive. For the time being our only communication with the outside world is via a motorola two-way radio, which gives us contact with the four neighboring kibbutzim, Lavon, Kishor, Tuval and Pelech.

The road to the site is, as of this writing, all but finished. It is a gravel-base road, and it is passable. Though not in as good a shape as we wish, it is certainly acceptable. We continue to fight for pavement or some solution which will prevent dust in the summer and mud in the winter. Now that we live at the site, our influence has actually increased—and I think that I will have some good news to report on this issue in the very near future, but I would rather not get into detail until I have more information.

We conducted our Aliyah LaKarka ceremony at the site on Thursday, October 10. You can imagine what a zoo-like atmosphere the first nine families have endured over the past two weeks, what with moving to the site, celebrating the holidays of Sukkot and Simchat Torah, and preparing for the Aliyah LaKarka ceremony. The ceremony was a rousing success, with over 300 guests, including Absorption Minister Yaakov Tsur, settlements department head Nisim Zvili, former settlements department head, Raana Weitz, as well as other distinguished representatives of the Jewish Agency and Keren Kayemet. We were also honored to welcome many guests from the movement in Israel, including Rabbs David foreman (NFTY), Moti Rotem (WUPJ), Kinneret Shiryon (ARZA), and representatives from HUC, the Leo Baeck Centers, and the Arava Kibbutzim Yahel and Lotan.